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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/055,238	10/26/2001	E. Stuart Savage	TETR-050	8348
37334	7590	12/09/2003	EXAMINER	
D'AMBROSIO & ASSOCIATES, P.L.L.C. 10260 WESTHEIMER SUITE 465 HOUSTON, TX 77042			CINTINS, IVARS C	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			1724	

DATE MAILED: 12/09/2003

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	10/055,238	SAVAGE ET AL.	
	Examiner	Art Unit	
	Ivars C. Cintinis	1724	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 1 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on ____.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-36 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) ____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☒ Claim(s) 1-36 are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on ____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
 Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
 Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
 1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. ____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
 * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 13) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application) since a specific reference was included in the first sentence of the specification or in an Application Data Sheet. 37 CFR 1.78.
 a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 14) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121 since a specific reference was included in the first sentence of the specification or in an Application Data Sheet. 37 CFR 1.78.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). ____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) ____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

Art Unit: 1724

Restriction to one of the following inventions is required under 35 U.S.C. 121:

- I. Claims 1-18 and 25, drawn to a lid, classified in class 210, subclass 542.
- II. Claims 19-24 and 27, drawn to an underdrain block, classified in class 210, subclass 541.
- III. Claims 28-36, drawn to a granular filter media support system, classified in class 210, subclass 291.

Claim 26 has not been included in any of the above groups because it is not clear whether this claim is directed to an underdrain block or to a lid. The preamble recites "underdrain block" but the claim depends from a lid claim (i.e. claim 25). If claim 26 is intended to be drawn to a lid, then the preamble should be amended to reflect this, and it will be added to Group I. Alternatively, if claim 26 is intended to be drawn to an underdrain, then its dependency should be changed to an underdrain parent claim, and it will be added to Group II.

Inventions I and III are related as combination and subcombination. Inventions in this relationship are distinct if it can be shown that (1) the combination as claimed does not require the particulars of the subcombination as claimed for patentability, and (2) that the subcombination has utility by itself or in other combinations (MPEP § 806.05(c)). In the instant case, the combination of Group III does not require the particulars of the subcombination as claimed because the support system of group III does not require the specific lid of Group I, as evidenced by claim 28, since this claim does not require that the lid include a rim for interlocking with a ridge of an underdrain block. The subcombination of Group I has separate utility such as a cover for a bottle. Applicant should note that a statement of intended use for a device (i.e. "for

Art Unit: 1724

an underdrain block”) is not a structural limitation, and hence cannot be given weight in determining patentability of an apparatus claim.

Inventions II and III are related as combination and subcombination. Inventions in this relationship are distinct if it can be shown that (1) the combination as claimed does not require the particulars of the subcombination as claimed for patentability, and (2) that the subcombination has utility by itself or in other combinations (MPEP § 806.05(c)). In the instant case, the combination of Group III does not require the particulars of the subcombination as claimed because the support system of group III does not require the specific underdrain of Group II, as evidenced by claim 28, since this claim does not require that the underdrain include a hollow plastic housing and a bottom wall forming two lateral rows of support legs (see claims 19 and 27). The subcombination of Group II has separate utility such as in a filtration system which does not include porous plates secured by anchoring means.

Inventions I and II are also distinct from one another since the underdrain block of Group II recites a lid (i.e. having a U-shaped rim) which is not commensurate in scope with the lid (i.e. having merely a rim) recited in Group I, as evidenced by claims 1, 19 and 27. Also, as explained above, the lid of Group I could be used in a device other than the underdrain block of Group II (e.g. as a cover for a bottle).

Because these inventions are distinct for the reasons given above and have acquired a separate status in the art as shown by their different classification and divergent subject matter, and because the searches for the individual Groups are not coextensive, restriction for examination purposes as indicated is proper.


Art Unit: 1724

Applicant is advised that the reply to this requirement to be complete must include an election of the invention to be examined even though the requirement be traversed (37 CFR 1.143).

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to I. Cintins whose telephone number is (703) 308-3840. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday through Friday from 8:30 AM to 5:00 PM. If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Mr. Blaine Copenheaver, can be reached at (703) 308-1261.

The centralized facsimile number for the USPTO is (703) 872-9306.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application should be directed to the Group receptionist whose telephone number is (703) 308-0661.


Ivars C. Cintins
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 1724

I. Cintins
November 26, 2003